



Step by Step

■ 58. Hebrews



Author // Unknown, although textual clues suggest Paul

Original Recipients // Jewish believers who, because of increased persecution, were tempted to turn from Christ.

Date of Writing // Certainly before 96 AD, likely before 70 AD

Type of Literature // Didactic

Major Themes // The Superiority of Christ above all things; the Present Ministry of Christ as High Priest; Encouragement for the struggling believer; Faith

Occasion for Writing // After coming to faith in Christ these Hebrew Christians began to experience an onslaught of persecution. This caused some to stop pursuing Christ and others to be tempted to return to their old lives in order to better fit in. The book of Hebrews was written to encourage the saints onward in hard times and has proven to do just that for 20 centuries. This book is designed to incite faith and encourage spiritual growth.



Simple Summary // Every generation of believers faces a struggle to resist returning to the life they have been saved from, and things were no different in the first century. After coming to faith in Christ, the Hebrew believers were pressured to abandon Christ in order to fit in with their family, friends and culture. This pressure caused many to drift away from the Lord while others simply stopped progressing forward. This letter is written to encourage believers to continue forward and does so first by showing how much better Jesus is than the types and shadows found in the Old Testament, then by providing examples of those who pressed on in the face of great obstacles.



Outline // Hebrews divides naturally into **two** sections, focusing first on the faith of others, and then on the responsive faith of each of us:

1-10 // Christ is Better

11-13 // Walk by Faith

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Key Verses

1:1 // God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

1:3 // who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

2:1 // Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

3:12 // Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God

4:15-16 // For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

8:1 // Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

10:31 // It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

12:1-2 // Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

■ ■ Jesus in Hebrews



Jesus is the central focus of this letter. He is higher than the angels (1:4), superior to Moses (3:3), a better sacrifice (9:23-10:14), providing a better rest (4:8-11), through a better covenant based on better promises (8:6). Most importantly, we see the exalted Christ, a better High Priest (8:1), who is seated at the right hand of God ministering to the needs of His people (4:14-16).

